

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1-6 are amended. Claim 7 is added. No new matter is added. Claims 1-7 are pending and under consideration.

OBJECTION TO DRAWINGS

The drawings of the application are objected to as allegedly failing to illustrate the feature "common axis" recited in claim 6. Applicants respectfully direct Examiner's attention to the roller shaft 21 illustrated in FIGS. 3, 4 (where it is not explicitly identified but illustrated similar to FIG. 3), FIG. 5A, and 5B (where it is not explicitly identified but illustrated similar to FIG. 5A). A person of ordinary skill in the art would understand the roller shaft as marking a "common axis" common to the shutter (which is element 3 in the figures) and the second pickup roller (which is element 2 in the figures). Similarly, in the non-limiting embodiments illustrated in FIGS. 8A and 8B, the shutter 3 and the second pickup roller 2 are illustrated concentric and along the same axis (not numbered) with the stepping motor 20. In view of the above explanations, Applicants respectfully request that a person of ordinary skill in the art would recognize that the shutter and the pick-up roller have a common axis, and, therefore, the objection to the drawings should be withdrawn.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, relative to the phrase "at the same time in addition." Claim 1 is amended herewith to clarify the claimed subject matter. In view of the claim amendments, the rejection is moot.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1-6 are rejected as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,755,434 to Takatoshi et al (hereinafter "Takatoshi"). Claims 1-6 are amended herewith to clarify the claimed subject matter. The claim amendments are supported by the originally filed application. No new matter is added.

Amended independent claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Takatoshi at least by reciting "a second pickup roller provided at a central portion of the paper stacked on the paper support base, and **selectively assisting** the first pickup roller to transport the paper sheet into the bottom removal-type paper supply apparatus."

The Office Action takes the position that the letting-out roller 21 (see e.g. FIG. 10) corresponds to the second pick-up roller of the claim 1 apparatus. However, the letting-out roller

21 does not only selectively assist the bank feeding rollers (e.g., 51 in FIG. 10) to transport the banknotes outside of Takatoshi's apparatus. In Takatoshi, no banknote is output unless the letting out roller is in contact with the banknotes stack (see col. 5, lines 13-40). Therefore the letting-out roller 21 does not anticipate or render obvious the second pickup roller recited in claim 1.

Additionally, the Office Action takes the position that the compression spring 40 (see e.g. FIGS. 8 and 9 of Takatoshi) anticipates the force applying means. Claim 1 is amended herewith to recite "a pressing roller which applies a pressure to the paper stacked on the paper support base towards the first roller, and which is provided at the end portion of the paper stacked on the paper support base," instead of the previously recited force applying means. The newly recited pressing roller is not anticipated or rendered obvious by the compression spring 40 in Takatoshi because the compression spring 40 is NOT located "at the end portion of the paper stacked on the paper support base", does NOT "[apply] a pressure to the paper stacked on the paper support base towards the first roller" and it is not a roller.

Moreover, the Office Action takes the position that the feeding roller 51 anticipates the first pick-up roller as recited in claim 1. However, Takatoshi describes the stoppers 60 as pushing down the letting out roller 21 and thereby preventing outputting bank notes (see col. 4, line 54 to col. 5 line 40). Thus, the feeding roller 51 is not capable to "[pick] a paper sheet from the paper stacked on the paper support base from the bottom" as recited in the case of first pickup roller in claim 1. The feeding roller 51 transports the banknote only if the letting out roller 21 picked the banknote from the stack. Therefore, the feeding roller 51 in Takatoshi does not anticipate the first pickup roller as recited in claim 1.

In view of the above, since the prior art fails to disclose all of the features recited in amended independent claim 1, claim 1 and claims 2-4, and 6 depending from claim 1 patentably distinguish over the cited prior art.

Dependent claims 2-4 and 6 are patentable by inheriting patentable features from claim 1 and by reciting additional patentably distinguishing features.

Claim 2 recites that "the pressure applied to the paper by the pressing roller is adjustable." Contrary to the position asserted in the Office Action, Takatoshi's col. 2, line 64 to col. 4, line 28 does not disclose that the pressure applied due to the compression spring 40 is adjustable. Applicants found no evidence that Takatoshi discloses or renders obvious that "the pressure applied to the paper by the pressing roller is adjustable."

Claim 3 is amended herewith to clarify that the apparatus further includes "a mechanical

assembly to switch the shutter to the open state from the closed state when the weight of the paper stacked on the paper support base exceeds an elastic force of a spring included in the mechanical assembly.” The claim amendments are supported by the originally filed specification, for example, the embodiments illustrated in FIGS 3 and 4 or 5A, 5B, 6, 7A, 7B, 8A, and 8B and the corresponding descriptions in the specification. In Takatoshi, the letting-out roller 21 is put in contact with the banknotes stack any time a banknote has to be output and not “when the weight of the paper stacked on the paper support base exceeds an elastic force of a spring included in the mechanical assembly.”

Claim 4 is amended to clarify that the apparatus further includes “a sensor located along the paper path, to sense when the first pickup roller fails to transport the paper on the paper path while the shutter is in the closed state, and to send a control signal to switch the shutter between the open state and the closed state, the shutter being controlled to be in the open state when a failure of the first pickup roller to transport the paper on the paper path has occurred, and to be in the closed state while the first pickup roller successfully transports the paper on the paper path through the apparatus.” Applicants found no evidence that Takatoshi anticipates or renders obvious the sensor recited in claim 4.

Claim 6 is amended to clarify the claimed subject matter. Applicants respectfully submit that the letting-out roller 21 and the stopper 60 in Takatoshi do not anticipate or render obvious the features recited in claim 6.

NEW CLAIM 7

New claim 7, which depends from claim 2, specifies that “the pressure applied to the paper by the pressing roller is increased in steps when the first pickup roller fails to transport the paper on the paper path.” The new claim is supported by the originally filed application, for example, FIG. 2 and the corresponding description. No new matter is added. Applicants found no evidence that the cited prior art anticipates or renders obvious the features recited in claim 7.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Serial No. 10/575,230

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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